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AMALANADIPIRAN

(அமலனாதிபிரான்)

of

TIRUPPANALWAR

PRESENTED

With

Meaning and Commentary in English

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By

D. Ramaswamy Ayyangar

Advocate, Madras-7

Published By

Visishtadwaita Pracharini Sabha

7, Nathamuni Street,

T'NAGAR, MADRAS-17

Price] 1970 [Re One

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ஸ்ரீ :
ஸ்ரீமதே நிகமாந்த மஹாதேசிகாய நம :
ஸ்ரீமதே ராமாநுஜாய நம :
ஆழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

திருப்பாணாழ்வார்

அருளிச்செய்த

அமலனாதிபிரான்

(தனியன்கள்)

ஆபாதசூடமநுபூய ஹரிம் சயாநம்
மத்யே கவேரதுஹிதுர் முதிதாந்தராத்மா |
அத்ருஷ்டதாம் நயநயோர் விஷயாந்தராணாம்
யோநிச்சிகாய மநவை முநிவாஹநம் தம் ॥

காட்டவே கண்ட பாதகமலம் நல்லாடை யுந்தி
தேட்டருமுதரபந்தம் திருமார்வு கண்டம் செவ்வாய்
வாட்டமில் கண்கள் மேனி முனியேறித்தனி புகுந்து
பாட்டினுல் கண்டு வாழும் பாணர்தாள் பரவினுமே.
(திருப்பாணாழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்)

உலகறியமலி புகழ்க் கார்த்திகை மாதத்தில்
உரோகிணிநாள் உறந்தைவளம்பதியில் தோன்றி
தலமளந்த தென்னரங்கர் பால் உலோக
சாரங்க மாமுனிதோள் தனிலேவந்து
பலமறையின் பொருளால் பாண்பெருமானே ! நீ
பாதாதி கேசமதாய்ப் பாடித் தந்த
சொல் அமலனாதிபிரான் பத்துப் பாட்டும்
சோராமல் எனக்கருள் செய் துலங்க நீயே
[வேதாந்ததேசிகர் : பிரபந்த சாரம் — 12

அமலனாதிபிரான்

அமலனாதி பிரான் அடியார்க்கு என்னையாட்படுத்த
விமலன் விண்ணவர்கோன் விரையார்பொழில் வேங்கடவன்
நிமலன் நின்மலன் நீதிவானவன் நீள்மதிளரங்கத்தம்மான்
திருக்
கமலபாதம் வந்து என்கண்ணினுள்ளன வொக்கின்றவே. 1

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உவந்தவுள்ளத்தனுய் உலகமளந்தண்டமுற்ற
நிவந்த நீண்முடியன் அன்று நேர்ந்த நிசாசரரைக்
கவர்ந்தவெங்கணைக் காகுத்தன் கடியார் பொழில்
அரங்கத்தம்மான் அரைசி
சிவந்த ஆடையின் மேல் சென்றதாம் என் சிந்தனையே. 2

மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமலே வானவர்கள்
சந்திசெய்யநின்றருன் அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்
அந்திபோல்நிறத்தாடையும் அதன்மேல் அயனைப் படைத்த
தோர் எழில்
உந்திமேலதன்றே அடியேனுள்ளத்தின்னுயிரே. 3

சதுரமாமதிள் சூழ் இலங்கைக்கிறைவன் தலைபத்து
உதிரவோட்டி ஓர் வெங்கணை உய்த்தவன் ஒதவண்ணன்
மதுரமாவண்டுபாட மாமயிலாடரங்கத்தம்மான் திருவயிற்று
உதரபந்தம் என்னுள்ளத்துள் நின்றுலாகின்றதே. 4

பாரமாய பழவினை பற்றறுத்து என்னைத் தன்
வாரமாக்கி வைத்தான் வைத்தன்றி என்னுள்புகுந்தான்
கோரமாதவம் செய்தனன்கொல் அறியேன் அரங்கத்தம்
மான் திரு
ஆர மார்பதன்றே அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டதே. 5

துண்டவெண்பிறையன் துயர்தீர்த்தவன் அஞ்சிறைய
வண்டுவாழ்பொழில் சூழ் அரங்கநகர் மேயவப்பன்
அண்டரண்ட பகிரண்டத்தொரு மாநிலம் எழுமால்வரை
முற்றும்
உண்ட கண்டம் கண்டீர் அடியேனை உய்யக்கொண்டதே. 6

கையினுர் சுரிசங்கனலாழியர் நீள்வரைபோல்
மெய்யனுர் துளபவிரை யார்கமழ் நீண்முடி எம்
ஐயனுர் அணியரங்கனுர் அரவினணைமிசைமேயமாயனுர்
செய்யவாய் ஐயோ என்னைச் சிந்தை கவர்ந்ததுவே. 7

பரியனுகிவந்த அவுணனுடல் கிண்ட அமரர்க்கு
அரிய ஆதிப்பிரான் அரங்கத்தமலன் முகத்து
கரியவாகிப் புடைபரந்து மிளிர்ந்து செவ்வரியோடி
நீண்ட அப்
பெரியவாயகண்கள் என்னைப் பேதைமைசெய்தனவே. 8

ஆலமாமரத்தினிலைமேல் ஒரு பாலகனுய்
ஞாலமேழுமுண்டான் அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்
கோலமாமணி யாரமும் முத்துத்தாமமும் முடிவில்லதோர்
எழில்
நீலமேனி ஐயோ நிறைகொண்டது என்நெஞ்சினையே. 9

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கொண்டல்வண்ணனைக் கோவலனாய் வெண்ணெய்
உண்டவாயன் என்னுள்ளம் கவர்ந்தானை
அண்டர்கோன் அணியரங்கன் என் அமுதினைக்
கண்ட கண்கள் மற்றொன்றினைக் காணாவே. 10

திருப்பாணாழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்

வேதாந்த தேசிகனருளிய அமலனாதிபிரான் உரைவடிவமான
"முனிவாஹன போக"த்தில் உள்ள

பாசுரங்கள்

பாவளரும் தமிழ்மறையின் பயனே கொண்ட
பாண்பெருமாள் பாடியதோர் பாடல் பத்தில்
காவலனும் கனவனுமாய்க் கலந்து நின்ற
காரணனைக் கருத்துறநாம் கண்ட பின்பு
கோவலனும் கோமானும் ஆன வந்நாள்
குரவைபுணர் கோவியர்தம் குறிப்பே கொண்டு
சேவலுடன் பிரியாத பெடைபோற் சேர்ந்து
தீவினையோர் தனிமையெலாம் தீர்ந்தோம் நாமே. 1

ஆதிமறை யெனவோங்கும் அரங்கத்துள்ளே
அருளாரும் கடலிக்கண்டவன் என் பாணன்
ஓதியதோ இருநான்கும் இரண்டுமான
ஒருபத்தும் பற்றுக உணர்ந்துரைத்தேர்ம்
நீதியறி யாதநிலை யறிவார்க் கெல்லாம்
நிலையிதுவே என்றுநிலை நாடி நின்றோம்
வேதியர்தாம் விரித்துரைக்கும் விளைவுக் கெல்லாம்
விதையாகுப் இதுவென்று விளம்பினோமே. 2

காண்பனவும் உரைப்பனவும்மற்றொன் றின்றிக்
கண்ணனையே கண்டுரைத்த கடியகாதல்
பாண்பெரு மாள் அருள்செய்த பாடல்பத்தும்
பழமறையின் பொருளென்று பரவுகின்றோம்
வேண்பெரிய விரிதிரைநீர் வையத் துள்ளே
வேதாந்த வாரியனென் றியம்ப நின்றோம்
நாண்பெரியோ மல்லோம்நாம் நன்றும் தீதும்
நமக்குரைப்பார் உளரென்று நாடுவோமே. 3

சீரார்தூப்புல் திருவேங்கடமுடையான்
திருவடிகளே சரணம்

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BANARAS.

AMALANADIPIRAN

Out of the 24 Prabandhas that go to make up the "Nalayira Divya Prabandham" this is the 17th in chronological order. It is the shortest of all the twenty-four, containing as it does only 10 verses. Its name is taken from the opening words of the work. There is another Prabandham, Kanni-nun-chiruttambu having its opening words as its name. Incidentally it is the next shortest Prabandha. It has 11 verses. These two Prabandhas are the last two out of the 9 that go to make up முதலாயிரம் (the first part though not exactly the first thousand) out of the 4000. The only other Prabandham that derives its name from its opening word is Nanmugan Tiruvandadi நான் முகன் திருவந்தாதி.

The Alwar who has given to us this அமலனாதிபிரான் is Tiruppanalwar. In common with the first four Alwars Poigai Alwar, Bhoothathalwar, Peyalwar and Tirumalisai Alwar, he also appears to have been an Ayonija, born of no one. He has this in common with Tirumalisai Alwar, viz., that he was brought up by persons who were regarded in those days as of inferior caste. Tiruppanalwar's foster-parents were of the Panar (பாணர்) caste, a sort of wandering minstrels or songsters. Tiruppanalwar's birth place is said to be உறையூர் (Woraiyur), now a suburb of Tiruchirapalli. It is known to Vaishnavites as Nichulapuri (நிசுளாபுரி). It is also known as கோழி, and is celebrated by that name by Tirumangai Alwar who came after Tiruppanalwar.

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Tiruppanalwar is believed to be an amsam (part-incarnation) of Srivatsa (the mole on the Lord's chest). The ten Alwars are referred to by Vedanta Dasika as an அபிநவதசாவதாரம் (Neo-Dasavatharam) of the Lord Himself. The Alwars came into the world with the set purpose of spreading the Bhakti cult among mankind. Both by precept and example they turned men's attention Godward. Each achieved this purpose in a different way. Tiruppanalwar's method is simple, short and straight.

A great love towards God seized the Alwar's soul even while he was quite young. Accustomed to song and music he came to the banks of the River Kaveri flowing near, and facing Srirangam in the north, used to meditate upon the Lord of that shrine about whom, whose beauty, and whose grace he had heard from elders, and he sang His praises. Not being able to cross the Kaveri and step into Srirangam because of social barriers, he was content to stand on the other side of the sacred river, and sing about the glory of the Lord to his heart's content. Sometimes in the fulness of his love he used to go into trance and remain in that state for some hours. On one such occasion it happened that the Temple Paricharaka from Srirangam, who used to fetch water from the Kaveri for the Lord's Abhishekam and worship, found him near the slender stream that was running in the southern edge of the bed of the River Kaveri, and shouted to him to take himself away. Being in a trance the Alwar did not stir. The Paricharaka took a pebble and hurled it at the Alwar. It struck him in the face above the eyebrow and caused bleeding. Startled out of his trance, the Alwar realised what had happened, and hurriedly went away from the spot profusely apologising for his unwitting apachara (fault). The Paricharaka took the water from the

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River to Srirangam, happy and complacent at the thought that he had been able to carry pure water unpolluted. But his happiness and complacency were very short-lived, for when he went into the Sanctum Sanctorum, he was shocked and dismayed beyond words to see blood trickling from the face of the Lord at the exact spot in the face where his pebble had hit the devotee. He realised the great sin he had committed, and was struck with remorse. That might the Lord of Rangam appeared in his dream and, reminding him of the heinous sin committed that morning, made him understand that the only way of expiating for it was to somehow bring that great devotee to His presence. As soon as day dawned the Paricharaka rushed to the spot where the devotee used to stand and sing, reckoned himself lucky when he found him there, approached him and delivered to him the Lord's own command in the dream. The Panar-devotee felt exhilarated and happy beyond words, but politely refused to comply with it because it was unthinkable that he could step on the sacred soil of Srirangam. The temple priest—his name was Loka-Saranga-Muni—who was very anxious to make amends for the heinous crime committed by him the previous day, came out with a ready solution. "O! Bhakta so dear to the Lord! You need not do what you feel is wrong—stepping on Srirangam soil. I shall carry you on my shoulders and take you to the Lord's presence within the shrine". Panar did not know what to do. On the one hand there was the Lord's command that he do come to Him. On the other, the prospect, none too pleesant, of having to ride on the Priest's shoulders—an act which was not only distasteful but also sinful in his eys. Ultimately the Priest's importunities prevailed and after crossing the River-bed and before entering Srirangam he allowed himself to be carried by Lokasaranga Muni, thereby earning the appellation—

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Munivahana—one riding on a Muni as on a vehicle. He closed his eyes tight and opened them only when he was made to descend from the shoulders of the Muni, straight in front of the Lord—that Sleeping Beauty of Srirangam along with the Smiling Beauty (Utsava) in front, with His two Consorts. And what he saw then has been described in the Prabandham he then sang, and which made him an Alwar. The enjoyment vouchsafed by the Lord to the Alwar of His superb Tirumeni from Foot to Head ஆபாதசூடம் is enshrined in the 10 verses of the Prabandham. The first 9 verses enjoy respectively the பாதகமலம், நவ்வாடை, உந்தி, உதரபந்தம், திருமார்வு, கண்டம், செவ்வாய், வாட்டமில் கண்கள் and the மேனி in that very order. (Lotus Feet, Garment, Navel, waistband, chest, neck, red mouth, eyes and the whole Body) The last verse states how his eyes which saw that Nectar அமுது will never see anything else. And they did not; for the Alwar immediately thereafter merged into the Lord, his individual soul being swallowed up by that Paramapurusha, All-Soul.

Acharyas have found several excellences in this Prabandam. Vedanta Desika was so deeply impressed with it that he wrote a commentary on it, a compliment which he has not paid to any of the 23 other prabandhams. His commentary which goes by the name of Muni-vahana-bhogam (முனிவாஹனபோகம்) or the enjoyment of the Muni-vahana (another name for Tiruppanalwar as mentioned above) refers to the Prabandham as an overflow of ecstatic enjoyment அனுபவ பரீவாஹம். It is also said there that this Prabandham is neither too long and tiresome, nor too short and cryptic. It does not indulge in being didactic or polemic. That emperor among commentators—Vyakayana Chakravarthi—Periavachan Pillay also refers to these and several

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other merits. Vedanta Desika draws particular attention to an excellent feature of this Prabandham viz., that even the Alwar's name does not find mention at the end or anywhere in the work. அடியேன் என்னுமதொழிய இப்ரபந்தம் தலைக் கட்டுகிறவளவிலும் தம்முடைய பேரும் ஊரும் பேச மறக் கும்படிதாம் பெற்ற அனுபவம். That is the extent of the intense enjoyment vouchsafed by the Lord to this Alwar.

Let us now go to the Prabandam itself, and try to understand somewhat the meaning and message of the verses.

FIRST VERSE

அமலனாதி பிரான் அடியார்க்கு என்னையாட்படுத்த
விமலன் விண்ணவர்கோன் விரையார்பொழில் வேங்கடவன்
நிமலன் நின்மலன் நீதிவானவன் நீள்மதிளரங்கத்தம்மான்
திருக்
கமலபாதம் வந்து என்கண்ணினுள்ளன வொக்கின்றவே. 1

He, (1) the ever pure, (2) the primordial Being, (3) the great Benefactor, (4) the ever-blemishless One consigning me to the service of the devoted, (5) the Lord of the Celestials, (6) the Resident of Vengadam with fragrant groves, (7) the One who has no fault (8) the One ever remaining unaffected by (the) faults (of devotees) (9) the One residing in righteous Paramapadam, (10) my Lord and Leige of Arangam with long ramparts—

His radiant lotus Feet appear as if they have come into, and are, in my eyes.

This first pasuram enjoys the lotus Feet of Lord Ranganatha. It refers to them as Tiru-k-Kamala-paadam. Kamalam is lotus. Tiru stands for all that is sacred and beautiful. These feet are soft, fragrant and lovely to look at. Tiru also means Lakshmi. These are the feet which

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are the lotuses caressed by Lakshmi. Desika has elaborated this sentiment in his Bhagavad-dhayanasopaana sloka 2. *லக்ஷ்மீபூம்யோ: கரஸரஸிஜை: லாளிதம்—பாதோம்போஜம்*. *திருக்கமலபாதம்* is all that is said here about the Feet.

The rest of the verse refers to Lord Ranganatha in ten epithets.

(1) Amalan.

The verse uses four words Amalan, Vimalan, Nimalan and Ninmalan—all having the same meaning. Malam (*மலம்*) is impurity, blemish. Absence of *மலம்* in a person makes him an Amalan, Vimalan etc.

The Alwar has evidently left it to the ingenuity of the Commentator, be it Periavachan Pillay or Vedanta Desika, or any other, to give suitable meanings to the four words in the context in which each word is used.

Amalan has been taken to signify and indicate Purity *in excelcis*. He is *பவித்ராணும் பவித்ரம்* in the words of Bhishma. That great purity is reflected in His capacity to make the impure pure.

(2) Aadi. The first and foremost. He is the first and primordial cause (*காரணம்*).

(3) Piraan. He is the only true benefactor. *பிரான்! உன் பெருமை பிறராரறிவார்?* (Poigai Alwar). Who can adequately understand your helpful tendencies?

(4) Adiyarkennai-aatpadtittha Vimalan. He who makes me a slave to His true devotees. The faultlessness suggested by the use of the word Vimalan lies in His being so unselfish as not to appropriate me and my servitude to Himself alone, but make me a servant of the true and

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faithful devotees of His (அடியார்கள்). The Seshatvam or servitude of a chetana should not stop with the Lord but must extend to His devotees. This is known as புருஷார்த்த காஷ்டை in Vaishnavism. A true Vaishnavite hankers to serve not only the Lord, but as a corrollary to his பகவத் கிங்கரத்வம் he wants to serve a devotee's devotee's devotee's devotee (seven stages) Vide Kulasekara's த்வத் பரிசாரக ப்ருத்ய ப்ருத்யஸ்ய and Nammalwar's அடியார் அடியார் தமக்கடியார் and so on.

Panarpiran enjoys the quality of the Lord that has made a பாகவத கிங்கரன் out of himself. The reference obviously must be to his having obeyed the behest of Loka Saranga Muni and agreed to ride on his shoulders—an apparently audacious act, but understood by the Alwar as a mere obedient act.

(5) Vinnavar-Kone. The Overlord of the Celestials in Paramapadam or Vaikunta.

(6) Virayaar-pozhil Vengadavan. The Lord of Tiruvengadam, Tirumalai-Tirupati, famous for its fragrant groves.

The Lord left Sri Vaikunta, sojourned at Tirumalai on the way, and finally came to Srirangam and laid Himself down. Vengadam is a stepping stone to Srirangam.

(7) Nimalan. The blemish that is negatived by this term is unapproachability. He the great and transcendent Lord, if he thought only of that aspect, will be unapproachable, and that will be a blot on Him. But here He is easily accessible.

(8) Ninmalan. He may be easily accessible; but what about our sins, sinfulness and lowliness? Will they not

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prevent us from approaching Him? The answer is no. For He has not in Him the fault of putting our sins against us. He is Avignata (அவிஜ்ஞாதா 483rd name in Sahasra-nama). One who does not know about His devotees' sins அடியவர் பிழைகள் நின் கருத்தடையா—Vedanta Desika in Mummanikkovai 4.

(9) Neethi-Vaanavan. He who pertains and appertains to Sri Vaikunta the celestial region above cosmos in which Neeti or righteousness reigns supreme.

(10) நீள்மதில் அரங்கத்தம்மான் Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam which has long and lofty மதில் or rampart. அம்மான் is a term signifying intimate relationship, a father, mother, a ஸர்வ வித பந்து.

The first nine epithets are descriptive of this Lord of Srirangam. It is His கமலபாதம் that resides in my eyes now, என்கண்ணினுள்ளன. The பாதம் in my eye. The பாதம் must be taken to mean both feet, as the predicates உள்ளன and ஒக்கின்றவே are in the plural. ஒக்கின்றவே—appears as if that பாதம் is in my eye, having come into it (வந்து). The impression is so strong and intense that the Feet will not leave my eyes: என் கண்ணுள் நீங்கா. நெஞ்சுள்ளும் நிங்காவே as Nammalwar has put it. The கண்ணுள் நீங்கா is given expression to here by Panalwar. Desika completes the idea in his Bhagavat-dhyana-sopana by singing பாதாம்போஜம் ப்ரதிபலதி மே பாவநாதீர்க்கி காயாம். The lotus Feet are reflected in the lake of my mind.

It is noteworthy that this Prabandham begins with a reference to the eye (of the Alwar) and ends with another kind of reference to the selfsame eye. (1)

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SECOND VERSE

உவந்தவுள்ளத்தலுய் உலகமளந்தண்டமுற
நிவந்த நீண்முடியன் அன்று நேர்ந்த நிசாசரரைக்
கவர்ந்தவெங்கணைக் காகுத்தன் கடியார் பொழில்
அரங்கத்தம்மான் அரைசி
சிவந்த ஆடையின் மேல் சென்றதாம் என் சிந்தனையே. 2

The Lord of Arangam, with tail and erect head-ornament which pierced the higher worlds when with great delectation is His heart, He measured the world; Who is the scion of the race of Kakut (an early king in the solar race) whose sharp and stinging arrows devoured the rakshasas who confronted Him (then), my mind has gone towards the reddish Peethambara worn by Him in His waist.

After the lotus feet, as the Alwar looks up, the Lord's Pitambaram in His waist attracts his attention, the enjoyment here being from foot to head ஆபாதசூடம். That is the order in which a devotee has to look at the Lord. The first verse referred to the Lord's Feet coming and settling in the Alwar's eye: and this verse shows how the Lord's dress drags the attention of the Alwar's mind, and how the mind leaves the Alwar and goes towards it. சென்றதாம். The ஆம் suffix shows to us that the Alwar did not see, and was not aware of, his mind going towards the Pitambaram. He suddenly finds that such a thing has happened.

என்சிந்தனை. My mind. O! After how many dresses, costumes and sarees did my mind go in the past dragging me thither. Even such a mind has gone by His grace to revel in the beauty of His Pitambara. A sense of satisfaction and happiness must have crept over the Alwar when he sang thus.

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Lord Ranganatha (moolavar) is like a மரகதமலை, an emerald hill. The reddish Pitambaram is like a halo of மாணிக்கம் wound round that hill. மரகதகிரிமேல் மாணிக்க வொளி சூழ்ந்தாப்போல்—a feast for any eye and any mind.

The earlier portion of the verse refers to Trivikrama avataram and Ramavataram and equate them with Lord Ranganatha, an Archavataram.

உவந்த உள்ளம் with heart full of pleasure. The Lord was touched by Mahabali's munificence and liberality which he would not permit even his guru to put down. Further, was not Mahabali a descendant of Prahlada, His premier devotee !

The நீள்முடி or tall கிரீடம் is one among the insignia of the Lord bespeaking His overlordship of the Universe. In Trivikramavatara, it became erect and grew and grew like Him, and pierced the upper regions. அம்பர மூடறுத்து ஓங்கி உலகளந்த as Andal put it.

நீவந்த—உயர்த்திய elongated (Another reading is நிவர்ந்த = நிமிர்ந்த, held erect and aloft.)

Rama is here referred to as காகுத்தன் a descendant of குகுத் one of the Suryavamsa kings who earned that name by vanquishing foes riding on the hump சுகுதம் of a Vrishabha (bull).

The prowess of Sri Rama with bow and arrow is referred to here as being such that His arrows swallow the rakshasas who come before Him.

That Trivikrama and that Rama are now here in Srirangam as Lord Ranganatha. அரங்கத்தம்மான். He has a fascination for this sthala because of the fragrant groves கடியார்பொழிலரங்கம். கடி is fragrance.

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It is His reddish Peetambara that has dragged my mind and riveted it unto itself.

The grip that the Peetambara has on the Alwar's fancy is seen in the next verse also. (2)

THIRD VERSE

மந்திபாய் வடவேங்கடமாமலை வானவர்கள்
சந்திசெய்யநின்றருள் அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்
அந்திபோல்நிறத்தாடையும் அதன்மேல் அயனைப் படைத்த
தோர் எழில்
உந்திமேலதன்றோ அடியேனுள்ளத்தின்னுயிரே. 3

The Lord reclining on the Serpent conch in Srirangam is the Lord who stood on the great Vengada mountain in the north, with monkeys running hither and thither,—in order that the celestials may meet Him there ;

The twilight - coloured garment of that Lord and the shining navel above it which created the (fourfaced) Brahma, —on them rest my mind's sweet soul.

Enjoyment of the Peetambaram persists and also leads to the enjoyment of the Navel above it.

அரங்கத்தம்மான் of the first two verses gives place to அரங்கத்தரவினணையான். The Navel of the Lord projected a lotus upwards when the Lord, who was in the Sayana pose during pralaya, bethought himself of சிருஷ்டி or creation. Moreover the நாபி or navel of a standing or sitting person cannot be seen to go up into the form of a lotus. So pointed attention is now focussed to the அரவின் அணை on which Lord Ranganatha lies stretched.

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Here He is seen stretched on the Serpent Couch. But earlier He was seen standing on the top of Tiruvengadam Hill in order to give audience to the celestials who wanted to serve Him there, their enjoyment of Him in Sri Vaikunta not being full. There it was transcendent glory only. Here it is easy accessibility—Saulabhya and Sauseelya. The Nityas and Muktas come to Tirumalai to enjoy this pleasing aspect of the Lord denied to them in Vaikunta.

When the Alwars refer to வான் and வானவர் they do not think of swarga and the devas there, but only of Paramapada and the nityas and muktas there.

The high hill of Vengadam is referred as the "north Vengada hill" north of Tamilnadu, the region where all the Alwars took birth.

Vengadam is also referred to as the hill wherein monkeys jump from place to place, tree to tree, or hill to hill. The reference to monkeys must be taken to be a reference to fickle-minded men who jump from one vishaya sukam (material pleasure) to another restlessly and ceaselessly.

My mind which was engaged in monkeying with worldly pleasures all these days has now got fixed up in one place —the navel of the Lord.

A steady contemplation of the Peetambaram to which the mind was drawn in the previous verse leads to the enjoyment of the navel above it (அதன்மேல்). It is an எழில் உந்தி shining and beautiful. It is great as it gave birth to அயன், Brahma. We see Desika translating these sentiments into Sanskrit in his Bhagavat dhyana sopana-sloka 5.

The reference to the ஆடை garment in this verse is even more significant and enjoyable than in the previous

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verse. The garment that is like twilight with its ruddy glow. Which twilight ? morning or evening? Desika says both. It is morning twilight destroying the darkness of ignorance and heralding the dawn of gnana. It is the evening twilight putting an end to our taapatraya and bringing in its wake coolness, quiet and peace.

அடியேன் occurs for the first time in this verse. The first two verses used only என். As reference is made in this third verse to உயிர் or soul, its daasya aspect impels the Alwar to use அடியேன் and not நான் or என். ஆத்ம தாஸ்யம், ஹரே : ஸ்வாம்யம்—our servitude and Hari's overlordship have been ordained to be always kept in mind (ஸதா ஸ்மர).

உள்ளத்தின்னுயிர் The sweet soul or core of my heart is now on that navel. (3)

(Pausing here for a moment we shall enjoy certain beauties emerging out of the opening words of the first three verses. The letters அ, உ, and ம are the first three letters in that very order. (The first verse of Tiruvoimozhi gives them as உ-ம-அ.). Put together they constitute the mystic letter ஓம் known as Pranava. Vedanta Desika draws attention to this fact in his Munivahana bhogam and states that Amalanadipiran is not only a poem of ecstatic enjoyment but an esoteric treatise dealing with the meaning and significance of the three chief mantras, Ashtakshara, Dwaya and Charamasloka : and in his ususl masterly way demonstrates how it is so in the course of his commentary. That is how and why his commentary Munivahanabhogam is regarded not merely as a Vyakhyana grantha, but as a Rahasya (esoteric treatise),—one out of 32.

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If we take the opening words of the first three verses we get அமலன் உவந்த மந்தி —the monkey that the Lord very much liked, or the monkey that greatly loved the Lord. Who but Hanuman can answer to that description? Indirectly the verses appear to contain a veiled reference to that great Bhakta who is the ideal of unflinching love and devotion to the Lord. As the Prabandham in its closing words echoes Hanuman's fine sentiment பாவோநாந்யத்ரகச்சதி (my feelings do not turn towards any one or anything else than my Lord Sri Rama) we can very well enjoy the indication even if the Alwar did not intend it.

Moreover the first letters of the next four verses make for another idea சபாதுகை. ச in Sanskrit is the conjunction "and". அமலன்உவந்தமந்திசபாதுகை. Or even அ-உ-ம-ச-பா-து-கை (taking the first letters alone are very meaningful.)

FOURTH VERSE

சதுரமாமதிள் சூழ் இலங்கைக்கிறைவன் தலைபத்து
உதிரவோட்டி ஓர் வெங்கணை உய்த்தவன் ஒதவண்ணன்
மதுரமாவண்டுபாட மாமயிலர்டரங்கத்தம்மான் திருவயிற்று
உதரபந்தம் என்னுள்ளத்துள் நின்றுலாகின்றதே. 4

That ocean-hued Lord (Sri Rama) who after driving Ravana once, later aimed a special powered sharp arrow and made the ten heads of the ruler of Lanka surrounded by square and immense ramparts, drop down,—that Lord is now my sole relation and protector in Srirangam where bees sing sweetly and big peacocks gaily dance. The waist band round His lovely stomach pleasantly strolls about within my mind.

In this verse the Alwar enjoys the உதரபந்தம் or waist band, an ornament known as அரைஞாண். (What ladies wear

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is called மேகலை or ஒட்டியாணம்.) This is referred to in the Tamil Tanian for this Prabandham as தேட்டரும் உதர பந்தம் – a waist-ornament not easily securable. The author of the Tanian must have felt that as the Lord is a தேட்டருந் திறல் தேன், His waist ornament which shines in His middle must be also தேட்டரும், rare.

Ramavatara episode once again. The slaying of Ravana is referred to. This is the main purpose of this incarnation. Ravana is referred to as the master or ruler of Lanka surrounded by massive and square ramparts. Those ramparts could not save him. He had ten heads, and for some time a severed head got replaced by another one. So it became necessary for the Lord to dismantle all the ten heads simultaneously to finish him once for all. This Sri Rama achieved by ஓர் வெங்கணை, an arrow out of the ordinary, exceptionally sharp and hot. Students of the Ramayana will remember how the whole world reacted in fear and terror when Sri Rama sent the final arrow, -the Brahmastram which felled the cruel Rakshasa. ஓட்டி having driven away. Possibly the reference is to Ravana being driven from the battle field by hard hitting followed by the gracious declaration "go and come back for war tomorrow." On another occasion also Ravana was taken away from the battle field by his charioteer who saw the sorry plight to which Ravana had been reduced by Rama's arrow.

ஓர் வெங்கணை ஓட்டி உய்த்தவன் is another way of understanding the words. The speed of the final arrow must be taken to be referred to.

ஓதவண்ணன். He with the cool and refreshing hue of the ocean. Even when He takes on anger in order to finish a foe (கோபமாஹார்ரயேத் தீவ்ரம்) His Tirumeni keeps and maintains its life-bestowing colour.

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As if to get rid of all troubles that had to be undergone to kill Ravana the Lord is now in Srirangam listening to the sweet wounds of the singing of bees from numerous groves all round (வண்டினமுரலும் சோலை) and gladdened by the sight of peacocks dancing in glee. (மயிலினமாலும் சோலை) It is well known that peacocks spread their feathers and dance on sighting clouds. Here the Lord is ஓதவண்ணன் —having the colour of the ocean, same as that of the dark water-laden clouds. No wonder they dance merrily all the year round and not merely during winter.

It is the waist ornament of such a Lord that has entered into my heart, and staying there permanently, engages itself in taking fine strolls (உலா) His stomach band gaily strolls within my mind. பந்தனம் is a band. It usually tightens. But within my heart I see it relaxing and at ease.

It is the mark made by His being bound by a rope round His waist that made Him a Damodara. (4)

FIFTH VERSE

பாரமாய பழவினை பற்றறுத்து என்னைத் தன்
வாரமாக்கி வைத்தான் வைத்தன்றி என்னுள்புகுந்தான்
கோரமாதவம் செய்தனன்கொல் அறியேன் அரங்கத்தம்
மான் திரு
ஆர மார்பதன்றே அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டதே. 5

Having cut asunder the firm hold of ancient and heavy load of sins on me, He (the Lord) has made me His (exclusive) slave: not only that, but He has entered into me. (For achieving this), What great and severe penance has been performed by me (or by Him), I do not know. (But this I see) It is the chest of my Lord of Srirangam beautified by Lakshmi and the garland (Vaijayanti) that has captured and captivated me.

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The chest of the Lord is enjoyed in this pasuram. Unlike the previous four verses there is no reference to the Lord or His exploits. The change wrought by the Lord in the Alwar is the topic of the verse.

Suddenly the Alwar feels that all his ancient and countless sins have ceased to bind him down to samsara and that the Lord has also admitted him into the fold of His chosen devotees always rendering willing service to Him in thought word and deed. The Lord did not stop there but He entered into the Alwar's heart. It was the waist ornament that was said to have entered into the Alwar's heart in the previous verse. In this verse He Himself is seen to have entered into the Alwar's heart.

Stupefied at all this welcome change in himself, the Alwar pauses for a while and asks himself "what is it that has brought about such a vast improvement in me? Usually by doing penance people achieve what cannot otherwise be achieved. For achieving great ends the penance has to be of long duration and of great severity. I have never been guilty of any good deed at any time. I never took to penance of any sort. Far from it, I have always been a slave to my senses, and never knew what it is to keep them under control. How can I take to any penance, much less to such a frightfully severe and immense penance as to obtain this great and glorious result? So I am not responsible for this change for the better in me.

Could it be that the great and merciful Lord Himself underwent the intolerable rigours of a mighty penance for my uplift? I do not know and I cannot say. He is not incapable of such a mad act. Is he not அடியராளர்க்கு இரங்கும் அரங்கனைய பித்தன்? Did He not give out from Arjuna's chariot மோக்ஷயிஷ்யாமி. There is nothing He

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will not do to recapture souls that have gone astray for long. Still I do not believe I have become what I now am, by any act of His.

Ah! I now see. No penance of mine: nor any of the Lord. There is no need at all for any one to do anything by way of penance. For here I see and realise beyond doubt that I have been captured and held captive by the திரு ஆரமார்பு of my Lord Ranganatha —the beautiful chest adorned by the garland known as Vaijayanti or Vanamalai. Or taking Tiru to refer to Lakshmi who ever resides in the Lord's chest (அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று) —that chest presided over by Lakshmi who resides therein and further beautified by Vanamalai—That chest has enslaved me. Why do any penance mortifying the Indriyas, when through the chief and most important, of them, the eye, one can have a vision of that lovely chest and immediately become a daasa to the Lord?

The Lord's Tirumeni is known as Subhaasraya and Divyamangala Vigraha since it has the capacity to dispel sins and confer all auspiciousness. That aspect is very well brought out in this verse. (5)

SIXTH VERSE

துண்டவெண்பிறையன் துயர்தீர்த்தவன் அஞ்சிறைய
வண்டுவாழ்பொழில் சூழ் அரங்கநகர் மேயவப்பன்
அண்டரண்ட பகிரண்டத்தொரு மாநிலம் எழுமால்வரை
முற்றும்
உண்ட கண்டம் கண்டீர் அடியேனே உய்யக்கொண்டதே. 6

He who dispelled the grief of Paramasiva having the white broken moon (in his head), is my Lord who has come to the city of Arangam surrounded by groves in which live

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(swarms of) bees with charming wings. His throat which (once upon a time) completely swallowed the worlds inhabited by a class of people known as Andar (அண்டர்) and the world beyond those worlds, and this unique big earth, and also the seven great Kulaachalaas,—that throat it is that has saved me—behold !

———

The Lord's throat is the theme of this verse. That throat, the Alwar says, has taken up the task of infusing life into, and conferring protection on, him. I have done nothing to warrant any improvement in my morbid and almost dead state. But lo ! and behold—this throat has worked the miracle of saving me.

To the throat however this is nothing. For it is used to work greater miracles. Once upon a time during pralaya, did it not gulp the entire cosmos leaving nothing behind முற்றும்.—ஒருபொருள் புறப்பாடின்றி முழுவதும், as Nammalwar puts it. All the worlds and super-worlds were swallowed by that throat. Lest we of this earth should think that we were exceptions—the Alwar makes specific mention of our world also being taken in ஒருமாநிலம். This unique (important to us) and expansive world too. The seven immense Kulaachalaas were no exceptions.

That throat of the Lord who is a father unto me, who has come to Sriranga-nagar to enjoy peace, coolness and comfort amidst its groves full of bees with lovely wings flitting hither and thither humming pleasant tunes all the while.

The reference to the bees has been taken by Vedanta Desika as a veiled reference to Acharyas who are resorted to by devotees to carry their message of love and devotion to the Lord. The Alwars have in several places requested the

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bees, birds and similar beings to act as their messenger. அஞ்சிறைய மடநாராய், அறுகால சிறுவண்டே etc. Srirangam is and has always been the headquarters of Sri-Vaishnava Acharyas. It is this Lord of Ranganagar that wiped out the grief of Siva when a skull got attached to his hand. Siva is referred to here as the one with the crescent (துண்ட fragment) moon. (6)

SEVENTH VERSE

கையினுர் சுரிசங்கனலாழியர் நீள்வரைபோல்
மெய்யனுர் துளபவிரை யார்கமழ் நீண்முடி எம்
ஐயனுர் அணியரங்கனுர் அரவினணை மிசைமேயமாயனுர்
செய்யவாய் ஐயோ என்னைச் சிந்தை கவர்ந்ததுவே. 7

He holds in His hands the conch with winding rekha, and the fiery wheel (chakra). He has a body like an elongated hill. He with long kireeta exuding in abundance the fragrance of the Tulasi is our father and saviour. His (coral lips and) red mouth alas ! has enticed and carried away my mind.

This verse contains a more meticulous description of the Lord's Tirumeni than was contained in the earlier verses. First the hands of the Lord which hold the shanka and chakra are referred to. This description will befit only the Utsavamurty standing in front. The Moolavar has only two hands, the right hand pillowing His head and the left stretched upto the knee. Or the Alwar must have noticed the shankarekha and chakra-rekha in those two hands and sung about the same. Or possibly to the Alwars to whom had been vouchsafed the திவ்ய சக்ஷுஸ். divine eyes (as to Arjuna) by the Lord Himself, He gave dharsan with four hands. Who can say ?

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Next, the long and majestic Tirumeni presents itself to the eyes of the Alwar and he enjoys it as *நீள்வரைபோல் மெய்யனுர்*, – one with body like an elongated mountain. That body as the Alwar looks up terminates in a dazzling *முடி*—a *நீள்முடி* as already pointed out in verse 2, which is girt with a garland of Tulasi, whose fragrance gladdens every pore and cell in the Alwar, and acts like a balm to his soul. For the *முடி* is *துளபவிரையேறு திருமுடி* (Nammalvar) and *நாற்றத்துழாய் முடி* (Andal). Lovingly the Alwar refers to the Lord as *எம் ஐயனுர்*—our saviour and protector. But this feeling does not last long. For the thinking and enjoying mind is captured and carried away by the Coral lips. Half in ecstacy, half in anguish, the Alwar cries out *ஐயோ* ! The coral lips and reddish mouth alas ! have caught hold of my mind and left me no means of continuing to enjoy. How cruel of those lips ! My mind so caught has forsaken me. (7)

EIGHTH VERSE

பரியனுகிவந்த அவுணனுடல் கீண்ட அமரர்க்கு
அரிய ஆதிப்பிரான் அரங்கத்தமலன் முகத்து
கரியவாகிப் புடைபரந்து மிளிர்ந்து செவ்வரியோடி நீண்ட அப்
பெரியவாயகண்கள் என்னைப் பேதைமைசெய்தனவே. 8

That primordial Benefactor who tore into shreds the asura (Hiranyakasipu) who came (to assault Him) with his massive body. Who is not easily accessible or available to the Devas (like Brahma, Siva, Indra etc.)—Those big eyes in the face of that Amalan of Arangam, which are dark, spread out on all sides, always restless, with red streaks running (across), and very long,—they have simply made a fool of me.

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Jitam-te-Pundareekaaksha. ஜிதம் தே புண்டரீகாக்ஷ (O ! Lotus-eyed ! I have been conquered by you.) These are the opening words of what are known as Jitente Stotras (five in number and claimed to be a khila rik or part of Vedic treatises) which set out the reaction of a devotee when he sets his eyes on the Lord's lotus eyes. Swamy Desika explains this reaction thus. ஈச்வரோஹ மென்றிருப்பா ரைத் தோற்பித்து நமஸ்தே என்று திருவடிகளிலே விழப் பண்ணும். This state is realised by the Alwar in this verse which relates to the eyes of Lord Ranganatha which the Alwar enjoys next after the coral lips.

In contrast to those lips the eyes are dark. (கரியவாகி) It is so broad that it looks to the Alwar as if this eye lotus has fully blossomed out and spread its petals all round புடை பரந்து. In addition it is merrily twinkling, and also lustrous, having a rare ethereal glow in which charm and grace abound.

The darkness of the central cornea (தாரகை) is referred to by Desika in his commentary on this verse as நிகரில்லாத நீல ரத்னம் போலே யிருக்கிற தாரகையின் நிறத்தாலே நீலோத்பலம் போன்று. This is the import of the word கரியவாகி. The broad white portion of the eye is thought of by the Alwar when he says புடைபரந்து. The fully opened out (மலர்ந்த) eye which has spread itself in all directions. In the Bhagavat dhyana sopana Desika refers to the eyes as ஸ்வாகதோதார நேத்ரம்—eyes beaming liberal welcome.

Added to the black and the white, there are the red streaks, indicative at once of His supremacy and of His being the Consort of Lakshmi, and also of His Vaatsalyam towards us,-which add to the beauty of the eyes. These

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several features make the eyes look like the just blossomed lotus-அப்பொழுதைத் தாமரைப்பூ in the words of Nammalwar.

To crown all, the eyes out of extreme love towards devotees keep on exuding gracious kataksha (looks) and thus give an appearance of movement (மிளிர்ந்து).

In addition to their unfathomed depths of beauty and grace, the eyes are also very long—almost touching the ears.

The reference to the eyes as அப்பெரியவாய கண்கள் those big eyes—instead of these big eyes, shows the extent to which the Alwar has been neutralised and become a பேதை ignoramus if not idiot. Suddenly he realises that some new feeling has come over him, and that the eyes are responsible for the same. He is unable to face those eyes but meekly says "those eyes which have reduced me to this pitiable state of not being able even to point to the objects that have brought about this change in me."

Perialwar when he first saw the Lord sings about His shoulders, His feet, Lakshmi on His right chest, and also the Chakra (wheel or disc) in His right hand. But when he turned towards the left uplifted hand holding the Conch (Shanka) he became dazed and sings about அப்பாஞ்ச சனியம், that conch which even I dare not straight look at. The same dazed condition steals over Tiruppanalwar in connection with the Lord's eyes.

The Avatara of the Lord that comes to the mind of the Alwar while singing about the Lord's eyes is curiously enough Sri Narasimha Avatara known for its ferocious-looking face. The opening words of the Pasuram refer to the massive-bodied Hiranya who advanced towards the Lord in challenge and got himself torn to shreds. Lord

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Narasimha was unapproachable even to the devas like Brahma. அமரர்க்கரிய, this notwithstanding the fact that they knew that He alone is the ஆதிப்பிரான், the Creator and Protector. But there was one person there at that time to whom the Lord was not அரிய, difficult to comprehend or approach, and that is Prahlada. To him the eyes in that terror-striking face were like lotus ஸரோஜஸத்ருசா. (Daya sataka and Kamasikaashtaka slokas).

Remembering this the Alwar sings about அரங்கத்த மலன்முகத்து. The அமலத்வம் blemishlessness here has to be understood in contrast with Narasimhavatara. The eyes here are not seen in the midst of a frightening face but in a காந்தம் முகம் beautiful and attractive face. Moreover these eyes of Lord Ranganatha are a permanent feature, enjoyable for all time unlike Lord Narasimha's.

என்னைப் பேதைமை செய்தனவே. They have robbed me of my individuality, even me who like Hiranya fought back His த்வம் மே by my அஹம் மே. When He graciously said to me "you are mine", I had the temerity to rejoin "No I belong to myself." But the splendid eyes have now cured me of that mentality. His eyes have fed me by their very glances with real sustenance in the shape of seshatva, even as fish feed their young ones by looking at them.

NINTH VERSE

ஆலமாமரத்தினிலைமேல் ஒரு பாலகனாய்
ஞாலமேழுமுண்டான் அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்
கோலமாமணி யாரமும் முத்துத்தாமமும் முடிவில்லதோர்
எழில்
நீலமேனி ஐயோ நிறைகொண்டது என்நெஞ்சினையே. 9

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He who is now reclining on the Serpent Couch at Srirangam, (once upon a time) was (seen as) a non pareil (comparisonless) Baby on the leaf of a banyan tree, having consumed (devoured) the seven worlds.

The blue-tinted Tirumeni (body) of endless dazzle of that Lord adorned by a beautiful garland studded with big and priceless gems, and an equally grand and glorious pearlgarland, has, alas, destroyed the feeling of fullness and satisfaction in my mind.

After enjoying particular angas and aspects in the Lord's body, a certain amount of fullness of enjoyment and the consequent feeling of self-satisfaction and some pride also, had developed in the Alwar's mind. In this verse a contemplation of the totality of that Tirumeni creates a feeling in the Alwar that all that complacence and satisfaction has been destroyed by the Tirumeni.

In verse 7 it was நீள்வரை போல் மெய், a body like a huge mountain. But now it is முடிவில்லதோரெழில். நீலமேனி a beautiful blue body without end. To the Alwar it appears that there is nothing else except that Tirumeni. It has so completely absorbed his vision. Added to that intrinsic blue lustre there are two sets of ornaments which multiply the charm million-fold. One is a Ratna-haram (ரத்தினஹாரம்) and the other a muktaharam (முக்தாஹாரம்). The word கோல meaning beautiful governs both the மணியாரம் and the முத்துத்தாமம். ஆரம் and தாமம் both refer to ornaments worn round the neck and prominently adorning the chest. முடிவில்லதோரெழில் may be taken to govern the ஆரம் and the தாமம், in addition of course to the நீல மேனி.

Desika throws out a beautiful suggession here to the effect that the ஆரம் and the தாமம் obtain endless எழில் on

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beauty from the நீலமேனி. Jewels are normally taken as giving lustre and splendour to the wearer. But where the wearer is the Lord, it is the other way about. The jewels get added lustre and beauty by contact with His body. ஆபரணத்துக்கு அழகு கொடுக்கும் பெருமாள் is a பிருதம் often expressed about Sri Ranganatha by the Arayars. பூஷாயுதை ரதிகதம் நிஜ காந்திஹேதோ:— Devanayaka Panchasat. The jewels and ornaments seek and reach the Lord's Tirumeni in order to obtain lustre for themselves. (Desika must have named two of his works as அதிகரண ஸாராவளி and த்ரமிடோபநிஷத் தாத்பர்ய ரத்னாவளி respectively only in the light of the Alwar's description.)

Sage Valmiki was the first to voice this idea. He makes Hanuman sing ஸர்வபூஷண பூஷார்ஹா: about the Lord's arms. "How is it", he asks Rama and Lashmana, "that these arms which are eminently fit to adorn all the jewels in the world, remain unjewelled?".

The Lord is enjoyed as the child who during interim pralayas (அவாந்தரப் பிரளயம்) is seen on a banyan leaf floating on the pralayaarnava—the great ocean of pralaya. Vide வடஸ்ய பத்ரஸ்ய புடே சயானம் பாலம்.

The entire created cosmos which was referred to as அண்டரண்ட டகிரண்டத் தொரு மாநில மெழுமால் வரை in verse 6 above is now concealed in His stomach. The process of all the cosmos passing down the throat was referred to in that verse while their lying dormant in the stomach is mentioned here. He is the Supreme Lord who is the supreme Cause. அகில புவந ஜந்மஸ்தேம பங்காதிலீலே as Bhagavad Ramanuja refers to.

ஒரு பாலகன் A child without comparison (ஒரு = ஒப்பற்ற) Sage Markandeya by special permission was

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priviledged to see and worship this Child with all the universe within its stomach. Yasoda was the only other person privileged to see the entire cosmos within a child,—Krishna. வைய மேழும் கண்டாள் பிள்ளை வாயுளே.

Tirumangai Alwar has sung a whole Tirumozhi (Peria Tirumozhi 11—6) celebrating in exquisite poetry this act of protection by the Lord during pralaya. பேயிருக்கு நெடு வெள்ளம் பெருவிசும்பின் மீதோடிப் பெருகுகாலம் தாயிருக்கும் வண்ணமே யும்மைத் தன் வயிற்றிருத்தி உய்யக் கொண்ட is a sample.

Who else can be the Supreme and ultimate God except that God who remains when all else and every one else disappear? That child is now அரங்கத்தரவினணையான்—He has exchanged the banyan leaf bed for the more cosy and more comfortable Adisesha couch. Vedanta Desika here points out that the great attributes of the Lord like காரணத்வம் and ரக்ஷகத்வம் shine in Lord Ranganatha as they did in the Banyan-leaf-Infant. The Alwar's enjoyment of the Lord's Tirumeni (திவ்யமங்கள விக்ரஹம்) is mixed up with his enjoyment of the Swaroopa (திவ்யாத்மஸ்வரூபம்.)

Aghast at the Swarupa and the Roopa, the Alwar cries out Ayyo! His admiration for the Swaroopam having this sweet and enjoyable Tirumeni knows no bounds. On taking the Ayyo of verse 7 which spoke of சிந்தை கவர்ந்ததுவே with the Ayyo of this verse referring to நிறைகொண்டது என் நெஞ்சினையே the Alwar is pained at the Lord taking away the only means of enjoyment, his mind, and thereby depriving him of the possibility of further enjoyment.

Kamban borrows this Ayyo from Tiruppanalwar மையோ மரகதமோ மறிகடலோ மழை முகிலோ ஐயோ!

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இவன் வடிவென்பதோர் அழியா அழகுடையான். The beauty of Rama's வடிவு (form) baffles and eludes his poetic imagination so much and so often that on this occasion he could not help crying out ayyo.

Nammlwar's ayyo is of a different sort. In Tiruvoimozhi V–1–1 ஐயோ ! கண்ணபிரான் அறையோ இனிப் போனலே. Afraid lest the Lord who had given Himself unto the Alwar should leave him in the lurch again, he cries out ayyo.

Intense feeling is sure to evoke strong exclamations. The explanation for ayyo, in Periavachchan Pillay's commentary is worth quoting in full here :

ஐயோ—பச்சையுடையுடுத்துத் தனக்குள்ளத்தையடையக்காட்டி, எனக்குள்ளத்தை யடையக்கொண்டான்; (having donned a green coat பச்சைமாமலைபோல்மேனி and shown to me everything within Him without exception, He has taken away everything of me). Like a magician attractively dressed hypnotising a person and taking away all his wealth. (9)

TENTH VERSE

கொண்டல்வண்ணனைக் கோவலனுய் வெண்ணெய்
உண்டவாயன் என்னுள்ளம் கவர்ந்தானை
அண்டர்கோன் அணியரங்கன் என் அமுதினைக்
கண்ட கண்கள் மற்றொன்றினைக் காணுவே. 10

My eyes which have seen my nectar in the shape of lovely Ranganatha who has the colour of the clouds, whose mouth ate butter when He became a cowherd, who stole my heart, who is the ruler over all the worlds and their residents—those eyes of mine will not see enything else.

———

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The Prabandham started with enjoyment through the eyes and ends with another visual enjoyment. This last verse is the only verse in which reference is made to Krishnavatara. The Alwar refers to Ranganatha as கோவலனுய் வெண்ணெயுண்ட வாயன் one who as a cow-herd ate butter. This establishes the identity between Lord Sri Krishna and Lord Ranganatha. That rasikasreshta Periavachchan Pillay says that even today the breath of Ranganatha can be seen to smell of butter. No wonder Desika sings in Nyasa Tilakam sloka 6 that He who enticed the Gopis and was easily accessible in Brindavanam is now majestically lying in Srirangam on His serpent couch.

What however attracted the Alwar in the first instance is the கொண்டல் வண்ணம், the colour of the clouds. The cool, refreshing and balmy sight of the clouds has brought relief to many a parched soul. Similarly the Lord who is envisaged as a மேகம் (cloud) has banished the taapatraya of many a sou scorched by beginningless samsara.

Desika interprets the words வண்ணம் not only as colour, but as quality or nature தன்மை. Thus கொண்டல் வண்ணன் is one who partakes of the quality of the clouds which are noted for showering on one and all without any sort of discrimination. Even as the clouds pour rain on hills and lakes, men and matter, the Lord showers His Grace on one and all irrespective of caste, colour, creed, age or sex. அநாலோசிதவிசேஷ அசேஷலோக சரண்ய is one of the descriptions of the Lord in Saranagati Gadyam. He who is the refuge of the entire world without thinking of differences inter se between them.

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வெண்ணெயுண்ட வாயன் one with butter-eating mouth. In verse 7 it was only செய்யவாய்—red mouth. Now there is a coat of butter over that reddish mouth. வெண் தயிர் தோய்ந்த செவ்வாய் (Kulasekara Alwar) To Yasoda the Lord showed this mouth after wiping it—தயிருண்டவாய் துடைத்த (தயிர் and வெண்ணெய் are enjoyed indiscriminately by the Alwar). To Nammalwar however He showed Himself in the butter stealing process without hiding anything. வைகலும் வெண்ணெய் கைகலந்துண்டான் பொய் கலவாதென் மெய்கலந்தானே is His anubhava. To Panalwar also it is undisguised வெண்ணெயுண்டவாய் with traces of butter.

என்னுள்ளம் கவர்ந்தானே Evidently the Lord has taken to the Alwar's heart with as much avidity as to the butter of the Gopis. He stole their butter, and in the same way my heart,—finding equal sweatness and taste in both.

அண்டர்கோன் The Alwar next reminds himself that He is the Lord of all. It is this Paratva or exalted nature that lends beauty, charm and merit to His saulabhya.

அணியரங்கன் Beautiful Ranganatha (or) One who lives in beautiful Srirangam. ஊர்பேருமரங்கமே. As Andal says, His place is Arangam and His name is also Arangam.

என்னமுது My nectar. Not அமுதன் nectarlike person but nectar itself.

Nectar obtained by churning the Milk ocean for self-seeking Devas is ruled out by the word என் "My nectar". I am not a person who gets the Lord to serve my interests, and once He does so, forget Him. He is in me and I am in Him ever. That nectar is to be tasted by the mouth. But this nectar is to be devoured by the eye அமுதினைக்கண்ட.

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என் அமுது. The Alwar has referred to himself as அடியேன் in verses 3, 5 and 6 only. In all the other verses it is என் inclusive of this last verse. The நான் and என் of the Alwar are not like our நான் and என். Our feeling is born of Ahankara and mamakara. The Alwar's is born out of the higher satisfaction derived from the knowledge that He has "made me what I am". ஆருயிர் பட்டது எனதுயிர் பட்டது of Nammalwar and என் நலனும் என் நிறையும் என் சிந்தையும் என் வளையும் கொண்டு என்னையாளுங் கொண்டு of Tirumangai Alwar show that their proud feeling is the result of being the recipient of His Grace. This is known as satvika ahankara—which leaves no trace of bitterness or contempt in regard to others, but is a tribute paid to the Lord and His Grace.

கண்டகண்கள் All eyes that are capable of seeing and have seen things all and sundry cannot be கண்டகண்கள். The கண்ட here shows that what alone is worth seeing has been seen.

மற்றொன்றினைக்காணுவே will not see any other. In "any other" Desika includes individually and collectively all other forms of the Lord, Para, Vyuha and Vibhava and all other Archa forms except that in Srirangam. (Haarda forms are left out as they are not capable of being seen by the external eyes)

காணுவே—will not see. As a matter of fact the Alwar's eyes did not see anything else thereafter as he became merged in Lord Ranganatha. (10)

திருப்பாணழ்வார் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

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Vedanta Desika's infatuation for this Prabandham did not stop with commenting on the verses. He has added 3 verses of his own in the course of the commentary. They are given at page iv *ante*. The fascination that Tiruppanalwar exercised over Desika's mind can also be seen by the references to the Alwar as பான்பெருமாள், நம்பாண நாதன், and நம்பாணன்.

By far the best form of admiration is imitation. Desika's admiration for Amalanadipiran made him sing a Stotra in Sanskrit on the same pattern. That stotra is Bhagavad—dhyana—sopanam in which, following the Alwar, Desika enjoys the beauty of Lord Sri Ranganatha from foot to head.

The Grace of Lord Ranganatha and of Vedanta Desika enabled this humble votary of theirs to furnish that stotra with an English commentary three years back. That self-same Grace has fulfilled itself by getting out of me this English commentary on the Prabandham which was the model for that Stotra.

All Glory to Lord Ranganatha All Glory to Tiruppanalwar

All Glory to Vedanta Desika.

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